

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Common Fragments

Two kinds of fragments are especially common in student writing - the phrase fragment and the subordinate clause fragment.

The Phrase Fragment

A *phrase* is a group of related words that is used as a single part of speech and that does not contain a subject and a verb. A phrase should never stand alone; it must never be separated from the sentence in which it belongs.

FRAGMENT Ed went to the park. In the afternoon. [The phrase *in the afternoon* tells when Ed *went* to the park. The phrase belongs in the sentence that contains the word *went*.]

CORRECTED Ed went to the park in the afternoon.

FRAGMENT Bob saved money. *To buy a new bike*. [The phrase *to buy a new bike* tells why Bob *saved* money. The phrase belongs in the sentence that contains the word *saved*.]

CORRECTED Bob saved money to buy a new bike.

FRAGMENT I just saw Eliza. *Swimming in the pool*. [The phrase *swimming in the pool* tells about *Eliza*. The phrase belongs in the sentence that contains the name *Eliza*.]

CORRECTED I just saw Eliza swimming in the pool.

<p>NOTE A word that ends in <i>-ing</i> and looks like a verb (<i>talking, hurrying, swimming</i>) cannot stand as the verb in the sentence unless it has a helping verb with it (<i>is talking, have been hurrying, were swimming</i>)</p>
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The Subordinate Clause Fragment

A *clause* is a group of words that contains a verb and its subject and is used as part of a sentence. A clause that does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone is called a *subordinate clause*. One way to recognize subordinate clauses is to watch for the words that are often used to introduce them. These are relative pronouns (*who, whom, whose, which, and that*) and subordinating conjunctions (see list on my website). If the subordinate clause is separated from the main clause, the subordinate clause becomes a fragment.

FRAGMENT She bought me *Tom Sawyer*. *Which is my favorite book*.
[The subordinate clause *which is my favorite book* modifies *Tom Sawyer*.
The clause needs to be joined to the sentence that contains the words it
modifies.]

CORRECTED She bought me *Tom Sawyer*, which is my favorite book.

FRAGMENT I cannot go to the park. *Unless I finish my homework*. [The subordinate
clause *unless I finish my homework* explains the verb phrase *can go*. The
clause needs to be joined to the sentence that contains the verb phrase it
explains.

CORRECTED I cannot go to the park unless I finish my homework.

Correcting Fragments

The following groups of words are all fragments. Before or after each one, add enough words to make a sentence. Write each sentence in the space provided using correct punctuation and supplying capital letters where they are needed.

EXAMPLE after the girl finished dancing
 The audience applauded loudly after the girl finished dancing.

1. on top of the mountain

2. although the sea was rough

3. if he had not sneezed when he did

4. moving stealthily through the jungle

5. to finish her essay